

THE FIFTEEN SOVIET REPUBLICS
TODAY AND TOMORROW

LATVIA

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Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

by
Vilis Lacis
Latvian writer

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Booklet

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London
December, 1959

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VILIS LACIS

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A Note on the Author

VILIS LACIS is well-known as one of the Soviet Union's leading novelists and statesmen.

He was born in 1904 in the village of Rimui, not far from Riga. His father was a port worker.

His parents moved to Barnaul, in the Altai, in 1917 when the Germans occupied Latvia, and the young 14-year-old Vilis was soon seeing his poems, sketches and satirical articles published in the local press.

It was during this period that he worked as a messenger boy for a local newspaper. Later he became secretary of a village Soviet.

In 1921 Lacis returned with his parents to his native Latvia where he worked in succession as docker, fisherman, ship's stoker and lumberjack, and again as docker.

In 1928 he was elected to the leadership of the dockers' trade union, and in the same year joined the Communist Party.

In 1933 he got a job as librarian in Riga, and then began to devote more time to writing. When the capitalist regime was ended in 1940, Lacis became Minister of Internal Affairs in the new Government.

From 1941 to 1945 he directed the Latvian partisan movement against the nazis, and then from 1945 until 1959 he was Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian S.S.R.

As a writer, Vilis Lacis had a number of stories published in the 1930's, but his first major work was *A Fisherman's Son*, which he wrote between 1933 and 1934. This novel was reprinted many times, translated into a number of languages, made into a film, and also formed the subject of a play.

His next important novel was *Storm*, which was written between 1946 and 1948. This work deals with the struggles of the Latvian people over several decades, covering the period under the Ullmannis dictatorship, the restoration of Soviet power in 1940, the struggles against the nazis, victory and the first period of post-war reconstruction.

In 1951 he wrote *To New Shores*, a novel dealing with peasant life.

A Stalin prize winner for two of his novels, Vilis Lacis has also written a number of plays.

Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

A Fisherman's Life

WHEN I was a young man I worked as a stoker on merchant ships. I travelled far and wide and visited many countries. Then for years I was a fisherman in Latvia.

We fished from sailing boats and row-boats too frail to weather any sort of storm. Often mothers, wives and children waited in vain for their men—but the boats never returned. A few days later the cold waves would wash up wreckage, torn nets and clothing.

Old fishermen in Latvia have sad memories of life as they knew it in the past, a life of anxiety and privation. But when the talk turns to life today faces brighten and wrinkles disappear.

In Soviet times Latvia's fishermen have come to lead a life that is rich and rewarding. Today they fish from big trawlers that carry them thousands of miles out into the Atlantic and the North Sea, over to Canada.

Three big trawlers now bring in as much fish as did Latvia's entire fleet before the war. The republic today holds third place in the world in fish production per head of the population.

When he was still a boy Ansis went to work for a rich landowner while his father fished along the coast from early morning till late at night. It was hard for Caspar Ustis to feed his big family, so his sons and daughters had to go to work while they were still children.

Caspar fell ill and died at the time of the First World War, and Ansis became head of the family. Following in his father's footsteps, he turned to fishing for a livelihood.

Need forced him to spend most of his time out at sea. His catch he sold to agents who resold it for three times what they paid him for it.

"Will life ever be different for us?" Ansis used to ask his mother wearily after a day of unremitting toil. "It isn't any better for any of our neighbours, either, for that matter."

The years passed. Ansis married and began to raise a family, but he was still forced to live in poverty.

"What about Ansis today?" you may ask.

He is mechanic on a motor boat in the Sarkana Baka (Red Beacon) fishing co-operative. Though the hair at his temples is grey Ansis feels young at heart.

He lives in a five-room house which the artel helped him to build, as it has helped so many other fishermen to put up their own homes.

The house is well furnished. In his garden Ansis raises all the vegetables his family needs. A paved drive leads to the garage behind the house where he keeps his car.

His children are grown up now and doing well at their chosen occupations. Ansis earns about 30,000 roubles a year. This is more than enough for food, clothing and recreation.

On Sundays he and his wife drive out to the country, or go to the cinema, or see a new play.

That's how life has changed for the working people of Latvia. That's how Latvia's fishermen live today.

Great Changes

Nineteen years ago the Latvian people overthrew the tyrannical rule of the bourgeois and proclaimed the Soviet system. Restoration of the Soviet system* in Latvia in 1940 was a natural historical development, prepared by the entire course of Latvia's social and economic history.

The people themselves achieved this restoration through their long, hard struggle under the leadership of the working class headed by the Communist Party.

For twenty years power had been held by a plutocratic clique which had shamelessly bartered away the interests of the country and its people. Foreign monopolies seized Latvia's economy and turned it into an agrarian and raw materials appendage of the capitalist countries. No wonder industrial output in bourgeois Latvia never reached even the 1913 level.

After the new system was established in 1940 the Latvian people, now masters of their own country, energetically set about building a new life. In each step they took they had the selfless aid and support of the other Soviet peoples.

The history of the past nineteen years is a history of the great changes that have taken place in Latvia, the rapid development of the country's economy and culture, the rise in the living standards of the working people.

Within the family of Soviet peoples, where friendship and unity are unbreakable to a degree hitherto unknown to history, the Latvian people have been able to display their creative gifts and inexhaustible energy and have achieved remarkable results.

It took a tremendous amount of effort to restore what had been

* In March, 1917, following on the February democratic anti-tsarist revolution in Russia, Soviets were set up in various parts of Latvia. The influence of the Bolsheviks grew apace in the following months, and, following the 1917 October Socialist Revolution, the demand for the establishment of working class power in Latvia became widespread, despite the presence of German imperialist troops, who then occupied much of Latvia. In November 1918 the Germans installed a bourgeois government under Ulmanis, but the Latvian people refused to recognise it.

In December 1918 they established their own provisional government which was recognised by the Soviet Government set up in Petrograd after the October 1917 Revolution. In 1919 the German troops were forced back. Riga was freed, and on January 13th, 1919, with most of the country cleared of German troops, the First All-Latvian Congress of Soviets was held, and a Latvian Soviet Government established. Following the intervention by a number of Western powers against the Soviet Union, interventionist troops also invaded Latvia. On May 22nd, 1919, Riga was captured and placed under the civil and military control of the interventionists. By January, 1920, after many bitter battles, the revolutionary movement in Latvia was crushed and bourgeois rule established with foreign assistance. The Latvian people overthrew this provisional bourgeois rule in 1940, re-established their Soviet system, and were admitted into the U.S.S.R.—Editor.

destroyed in the war, industrialise the country, and turn the small farms into large agricultural units. Difficulties were innumerable, but the Latvian people determinedly overcame them all.

The high rate of socialist development enabled Latvia to achieve in a comparatively short time a level of production no branch of Latvian capitalist economy had ever reached, even in the best years.

Such a rapid rate of development would have been impossible without the industrial might of the Soviet Union to rely on or the generous assistance of the fraternal Soviet peoples.

Industrial Latvia

Fifty years ago Riga's railway coach-works had been reduced to the status of a primitive workshop producing nails, horse-shoes and cemetery railings. Orders for other goods had fallen off more and more as the years passed.

Finally, the owner of the works sold it to Ford, the American car manufacturer. The same thing happened to many other of Latvia's industrial establishments.

All that now belongs to the past.

"After the Baltic republics, had, by the will of their peoples, joined the fraternal family of the socialist nations of the Soviet Union as equals among equals, broad prospects for economic and cultural development were opened to them. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have made great progress in the post-war period. From the predominantly agrarian lands which they were under bourgeois rule, these republics have been turned into industrially developed countries."*

Total output in Latvia in 1958 was 760 per cent greater than in 1940 and eleven times greater than in 1938, the peak year in capitalist Latvia. Latvia's increase in industrial output for 1958 alone was greater than her entire industrial output in 1939.

Heavy industry has developed particularly rapidly. In 1957 the total output of Latvia's metal-working industry was forty times greater than in 1940, while output of the engineering industry was 105 times greater.

A modern food industry producing high-grade milk, meat and fish products has been established in Latvia in the Soviet period.

In output and number of workers employed the milk-processing industry is the largest branch of the food industry. Since the war Latvia has been producing more than 75 kinds of milk products, including processed cheese, condensed milk, and milk powder.

The present development of the Soviet Union's productive forces and the outstanding scientific and technical achievements of the U.S.S.R. have strengthened the might of our country and the whole socialist camp, and have permitted the Communist Party to draw up a plan for the comprehensive building of communism in the Soviet Union.

It is common knowledge that today the Soviet Union holds first place in Europe and second place in the world in industrial output. In recent

* From a speech by N. S. Khrushchev on June 11th, 1959, delivered at a Soviet-German friendship rally on the occasion of a visit to Riga of a Party and Government delegation from the German Democratic Republic.

years the Soviet Union has overtaken the United States not only in rate of development but in absolute annual increase in output.

N. S. Khrushchev's report to the Twenty-First Congress of the Communist Party emphasised the far-reaching significance of the Seven-Year Plan as a plan for laying the material and cultural foundation of a Communist society.

Soviet Latvia will take a tremendous step forward in the coming seven years. Between 1958 and 1965 some 10,800 million roubles will be invested in the republic's economy. This is twice as much as was invested in the previous seven years.

Total industrial output will increase 65 per cent. Output of the engineering and metal-working industries will more than double as compared with the present level. The chemical industry, with capital investments twenty times greater than in the previous seven years, is scheduled for particularly rapid development.

Latvia's factories and mills will produce new types of machinery and equipment. The car-building works in Riga, for example, is to turn out electric trains capable of a speed of more than 90 miles an hour. They will be equipped with automatic devices to drive the trains and regulate their speed on turns, rises and slopes. By 1965 the works will be producing half of the electric-train carriages in the Soviet Union.

This year the bus factory in Riga has begun serial production of bodies for the eight-passenger "Spriditis" buses, the smallest in the Soviet Union. These comfortable midget buses, which attain a speed of 50 miles an hour, can be used for tours and excursions, at medical establishments, and as express taxis. They can even be converted into goods carriers by simply turning up the back seats.

The Sarkhana Zvaigzne (Red Star) plant has developed a very light motor scooter of original design. It will be producing 200,000 of these scooters annually by 1965.

Latvian radio sets are in great demand and have been highly praised at international exhibitions and fairs. New models include radios with remote control, automatic tuning and three-speed record players. The VEF electrical works will soon begin manufacture of combined radio, TV and automatic record-player sets, and high quality radiograms.

For Latvian industry and agriculture to develop still more rapidly the republic's power system must be enlarged. The seven-year plan period will see the construction of new electric stations and intensified development of the peat and gas industries.

The cheap natural gas that will come from Dneshava (Western Ukraine) to Riga via Minsk and Vilnius will be an important factor contributing to economic progress and improvement in the everyday life of the people.

By 1964-65 Latvia will have 42,000 million cubic feet of gas as against the 630 million cubic feet produced at present. This will be enough to satisfy the needs of the population in housing and communal requirements, and transfer to gas burning a large number of industrial establishments in Riga, thereby reducing considerably the amount of coal that Latvia has to bring in.

By 1965 production of peat briquettes will have increased 16-fold.

Some 350 million roubles are to be invested in the light industry be-

tween 1959 and 1965. Up to 180 million roubles will be used to enlarge the existing establishments of the meat and milk industry and to build new establishments. This is double the amount spent for the same purposes in the preceding seven years.

Latvia's fishing industry is also slated for rapid development. By the end of the seven-year period the catch will be at least 210 per cent of the present take, amounting to 200,000 tons a year.

This increase will be brought about by raising the herring catch in the North Atlantic and North Sea, working new perch and cod grounds off the shores of Canada and Greenland, and fishing for sardines off the coast of Africa and in the South Atlantic.

There will also be an increase in the catch of valuable varieties of fish like salmon and sea-eels.

When the seven-year plan is completed Soviet Latvia's industrial output will be more than fourteen times greater than in 1940 and eighteen times greater than in 1938, capitalist Latvia's most prosperous year.

Common Aspirations

As in the other Soviet republics, there is a widespread movement in Latvia to increase mechanisation and automation.

At each industrial enterprise the workers are making every effort to raise labour productivity steeply and increase output, and thereby to accelerate technical progress.

In the course of the first four years of the seven-year period thirty-two Latvian enterprises will be turned into models of comprehensive mechanisation and automation. Their experience will then be followed by other factories and mills of the same type.

Comprehensive automation and mechanisation are the major factors in achieving the 50 per cent rise in labour productivity called for by the seven-year plan. By the end of the seven-year period Latvian industry will have saved 1,340 million roubles through higher labour productivity and lower production costs. This sum is sufficient to build 670 five-storey blocks of flats.

Another way in which money will be saved is by implementing innovation proposals and inventions, which more than 19,000 workers have offered this year alone. This will lead to a saving of about 1,000 million roubles during the seven years.

Among the scientists, technicians, writers and actors of the Latvian Republic who were recently awarded State Prizes is V. Bush of the VEF electrical works in Riga. He and a group of fellow workers were given a first prize for original designs of automatic machine tools, semi-automatic machine tools and automatic lines that yield an annual saving of 1½ million roubles.

Bush is one of the best workers at the VEF factory. In recent years he has made dozens of suggestions on ways of improving automatization in production. Some of them have made work one hundred times more productive.

No one, however, is left unemployed when machines are introduced to perform his work. He is given other work that is often more highly paid.

Emulation for the right to the title of Communist Work Team is widespread in Latvia. This emulation is playing an important part in instilling a yet higher standard of ethics in Soviet people.

Members of the competing teams pledge to work in exemplary fashion, support any proposal for innovation at their enterprise, add to their general and political knowledge, behave in communist fashion both at work and at home, help one another, and set an example of good citizenship.

Latvia now has more than 700 teams competing for the title.

Every Soviet citizen, no matter where he works, is concerned with how he can help to fulfil the seven-year plan ahead of schedule.

Alfred Kliiva, lathe operator at the "Kompressor" works in Riga, has proposed that each worker should try to calculate how he can carry out his personal seven-year plan ahead of time.

After making a thorough study of the machine he operates, Kliiva decided that his quota for the seven years can be fulfilled in four and-a-half years. He intends to raise his labour productivity 30 to 35 per cent by employing highly-productive tools and devices on his lathe.

He has already suggested two innovations, but feels he can do more. To acquire the knowledge that will enable him to advance, Kliiva has enrolled at the Riga special courses for technical progress.

Kliiva's example is being followed at industrial establishments all over the republic. At the "Kompressor" works alone more than 120 men and women have pledged to fulfil their personal seven-year plans ahead of schedule.

The initiative shown by lathe-operator Kliiva is evidence of the high technical standards and patriotic attitude of this rank-and file worker reared by the Communist Party. His thoughts and aspirations are shared by every Soviet person.

Latvian Farms

Aid from the fraternal Soviet republics in the form of tractors, combines and other farm machinery for Latvia's collective farms and state farms helped to create a stable economic foundation enabling the small peasant households to join together in big collective farms in 1949 and 1950.

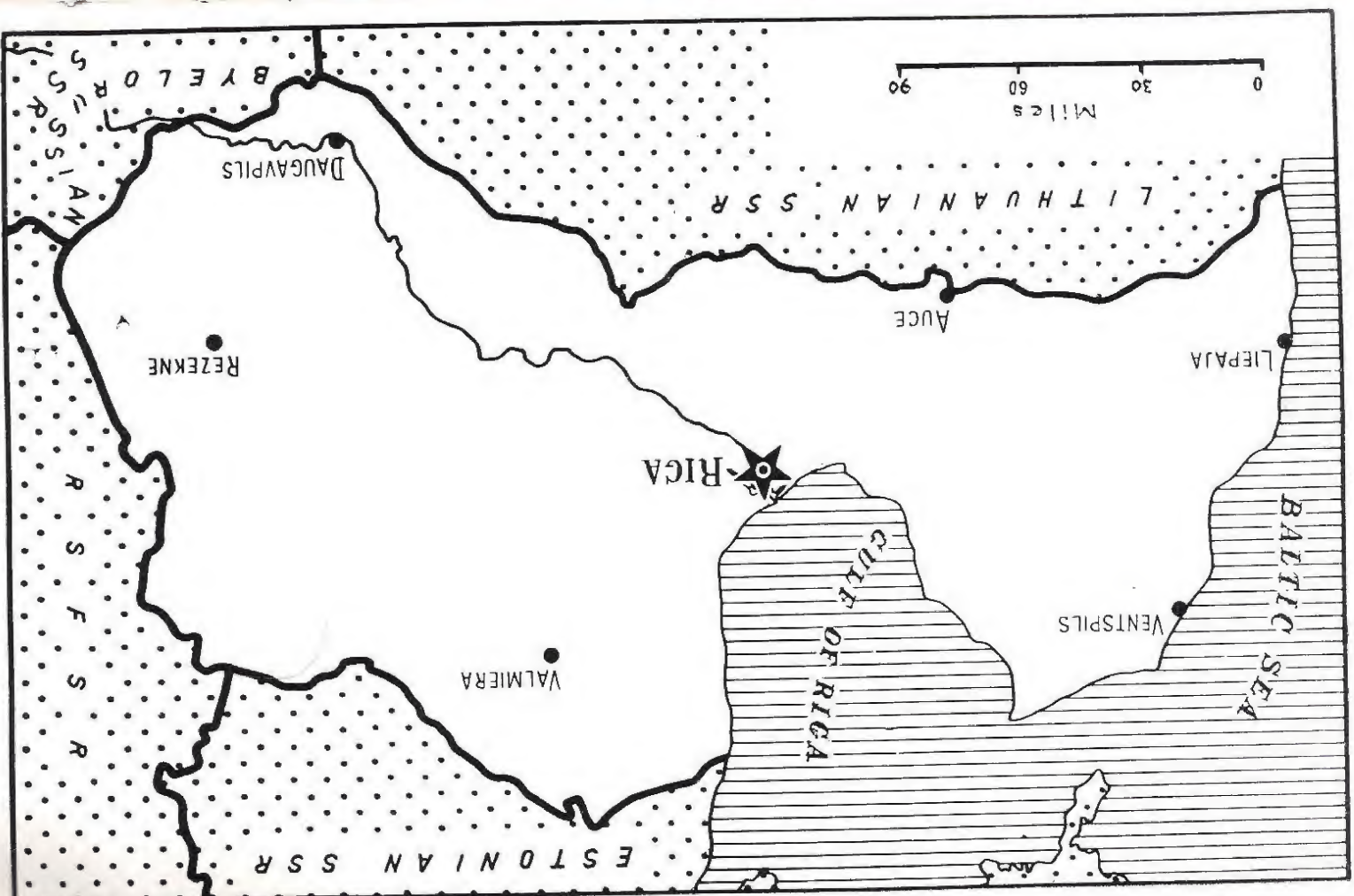
The collective farm system put an end to the poverty-stricken existence led by tens of thousands of Latvia's farm labourers and small farm owners by ensuring a steady rise in agricultural production.

Latvia today produces far more milk per head of the population than either the United States or Sweden.

Between 1953 and 1958 the monetary income of Latvia's collective farms rose from 678 million roubles to 1,377 million roubles. During the same period the average cash payments to collective farms for their work increased three-fold, and payments in kind increased 50 per cent.

Latvian agriculture is to take a big step forward in the current seven-year period. It will continue to specialise in dairy products, pork and bacon and pedigree livestock farming.

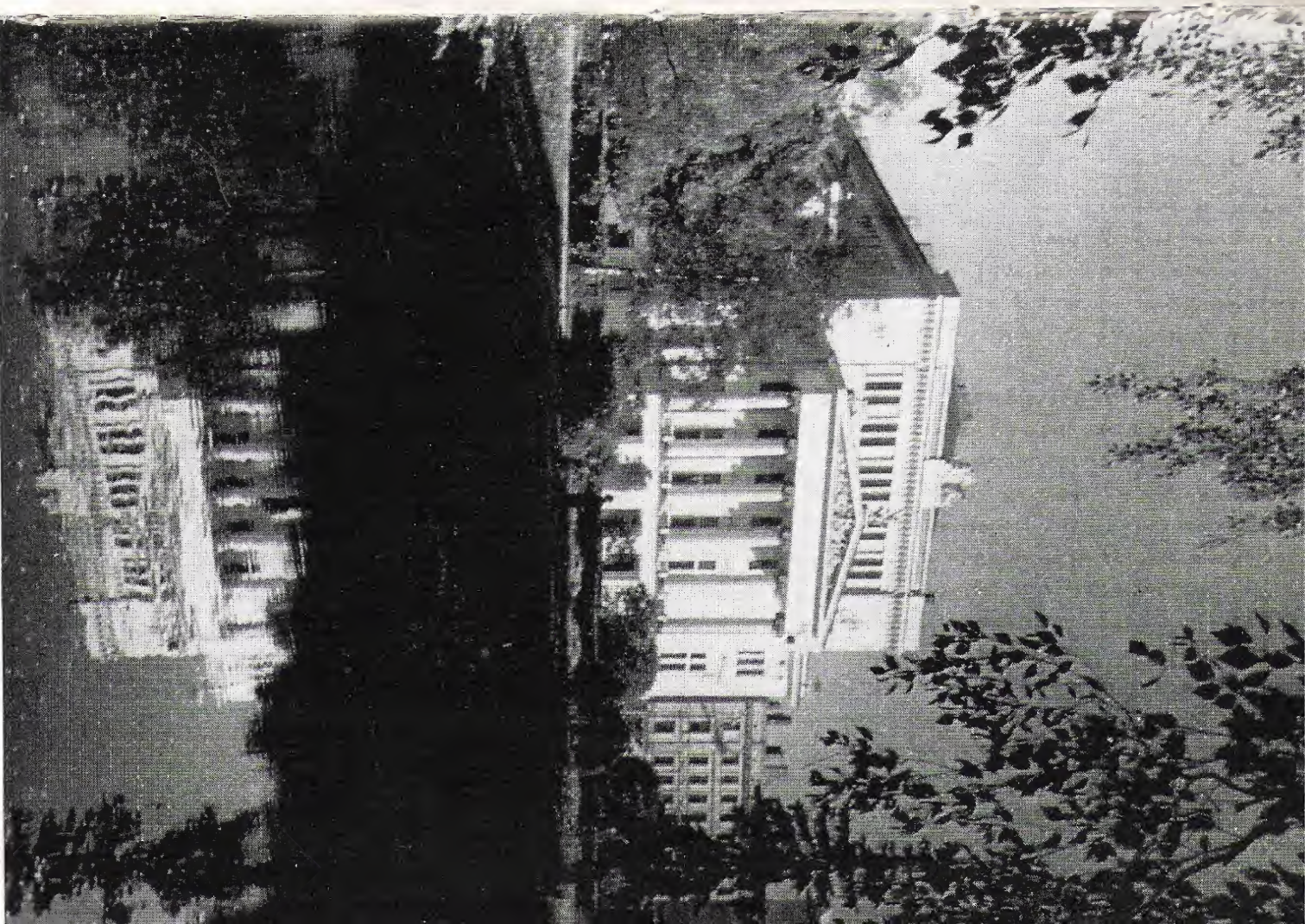
In 1965 milk output will be from 50 to 70 per cent higher than in 1958; and meat production will increase 80 per cent, exceeding the 1940 level by 65 per cent.



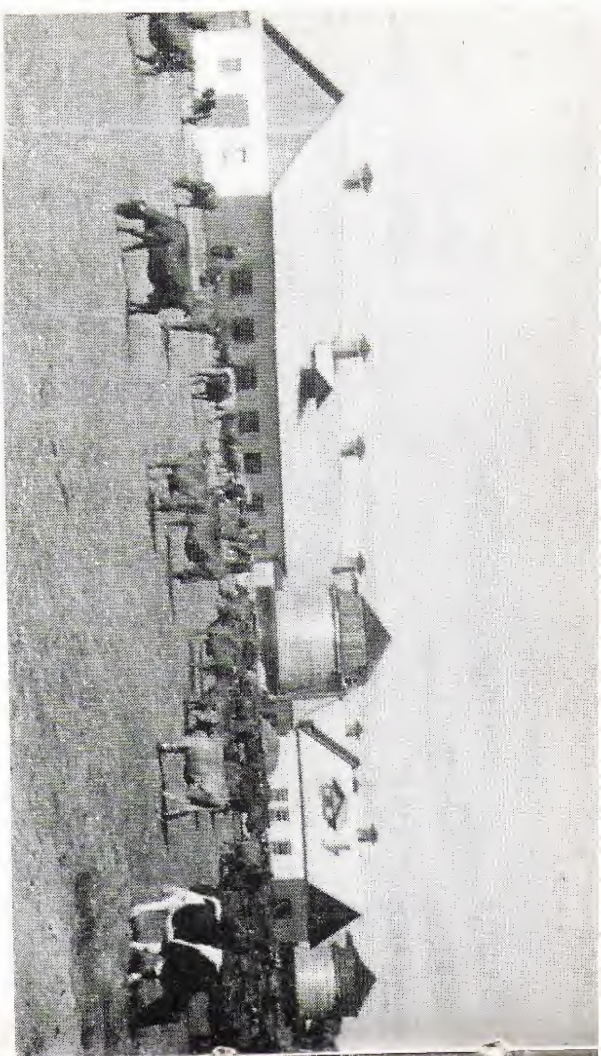
LATVIA: Area 25,000 Sq. miles. Population 2,094,000



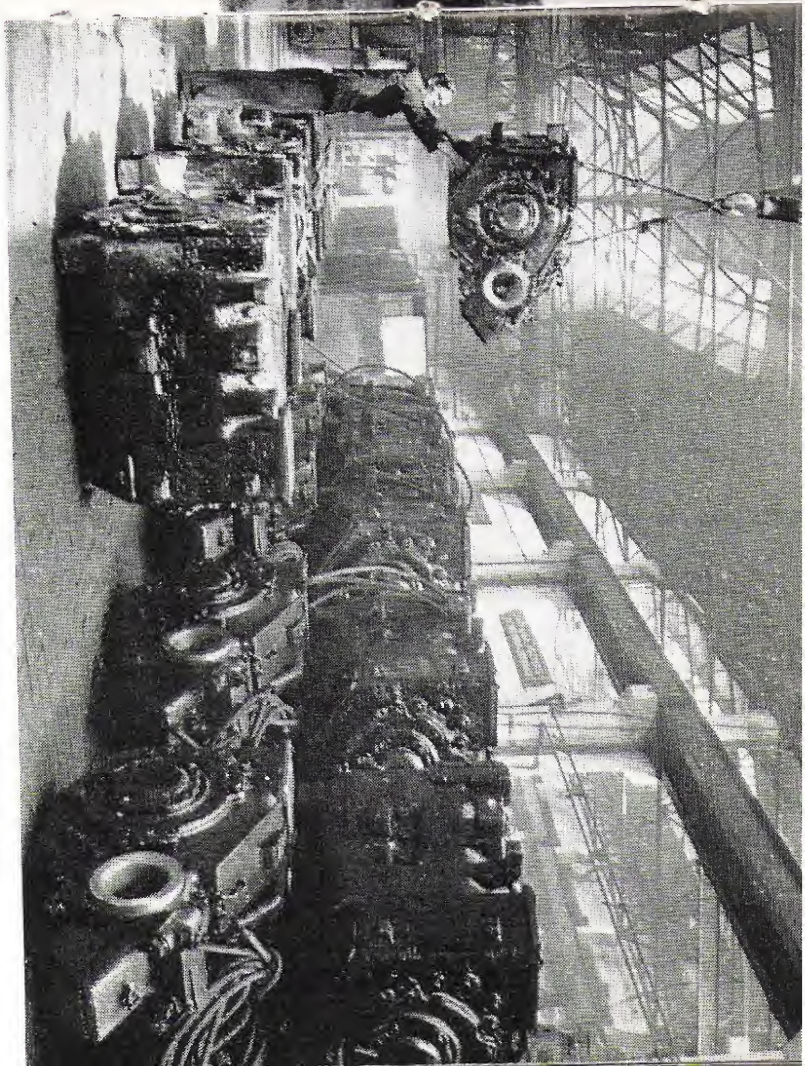
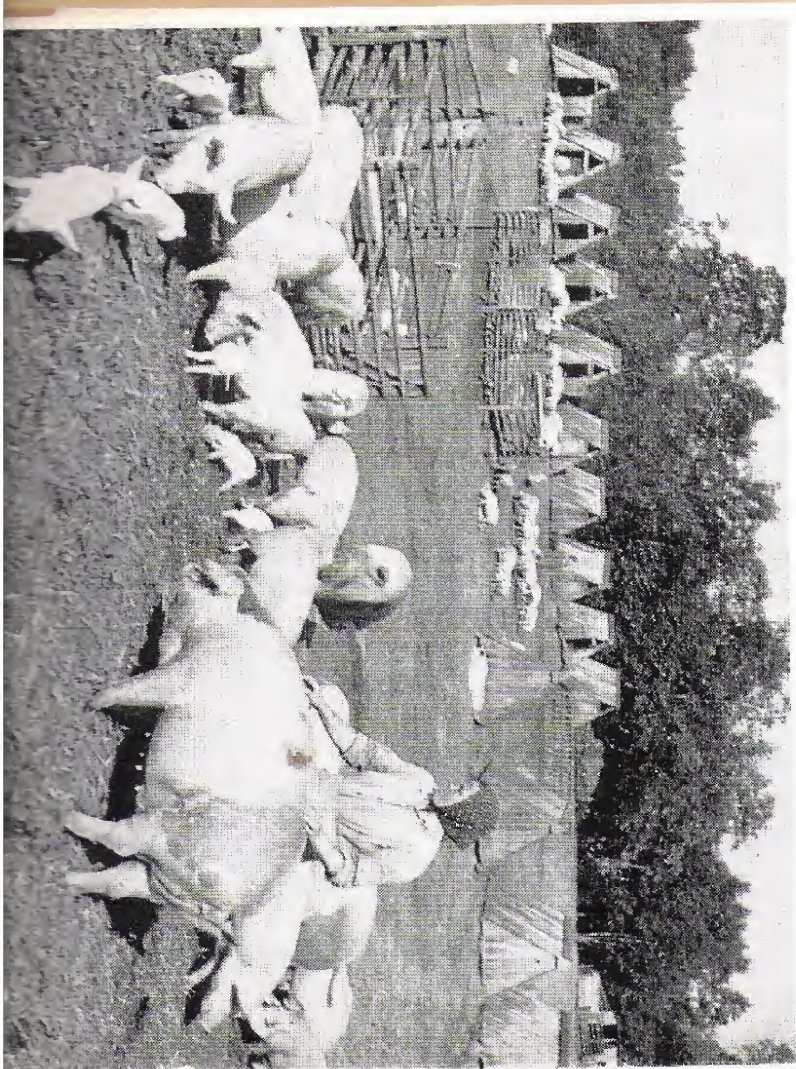
Rame Elhe, a Latvian State University student, is wearing the traditional head-dress and ornament as a performer in the 'Saulgrietiņi' Folk Theatre in Riga.



The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Riga.



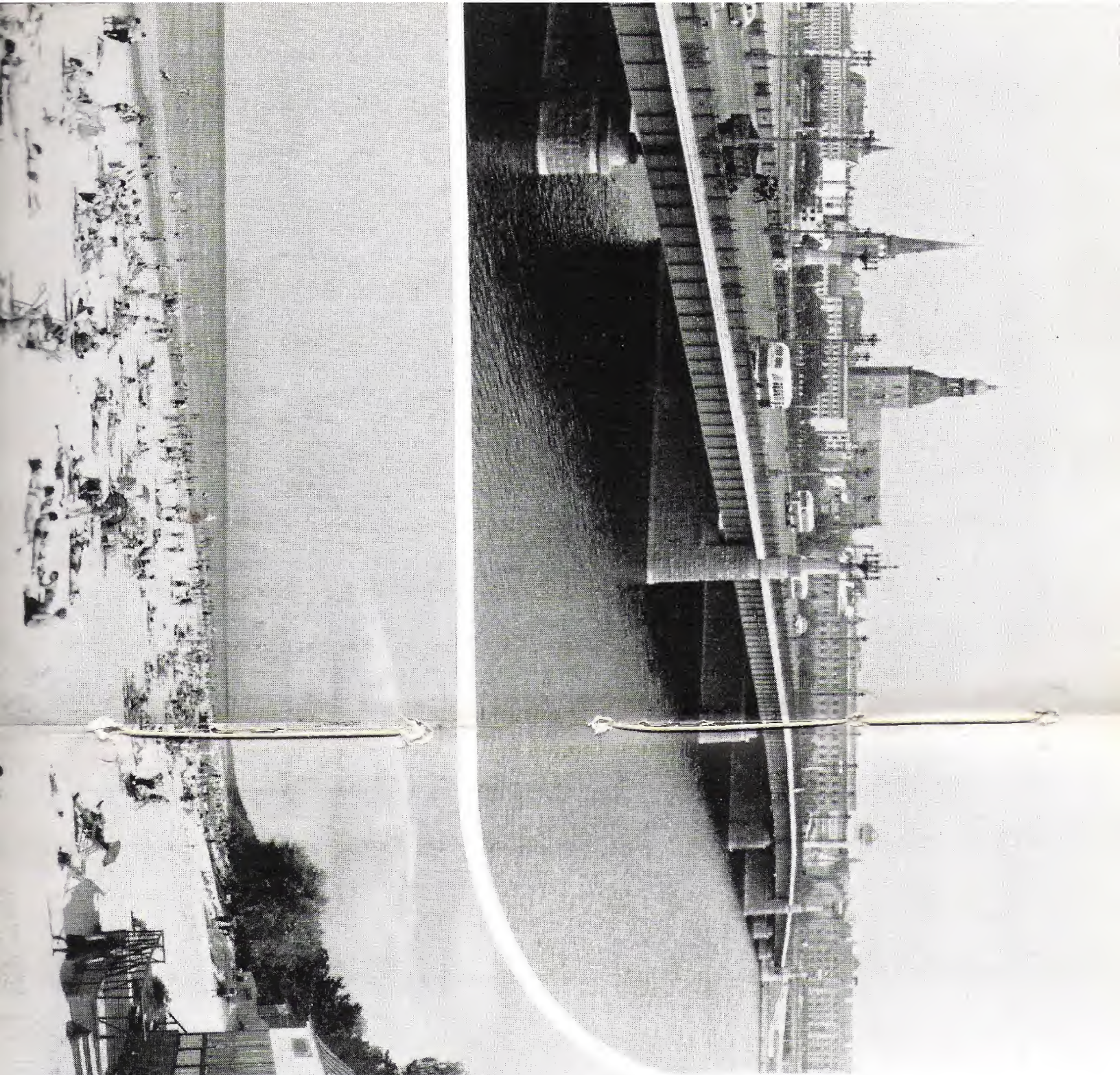
Latvia has a thriving agriculture based on six million acres of farmland. Above is the livestock section of the Marupe Collective Farm in the Riga District, whilst below is a summer farm for hog-breeding.



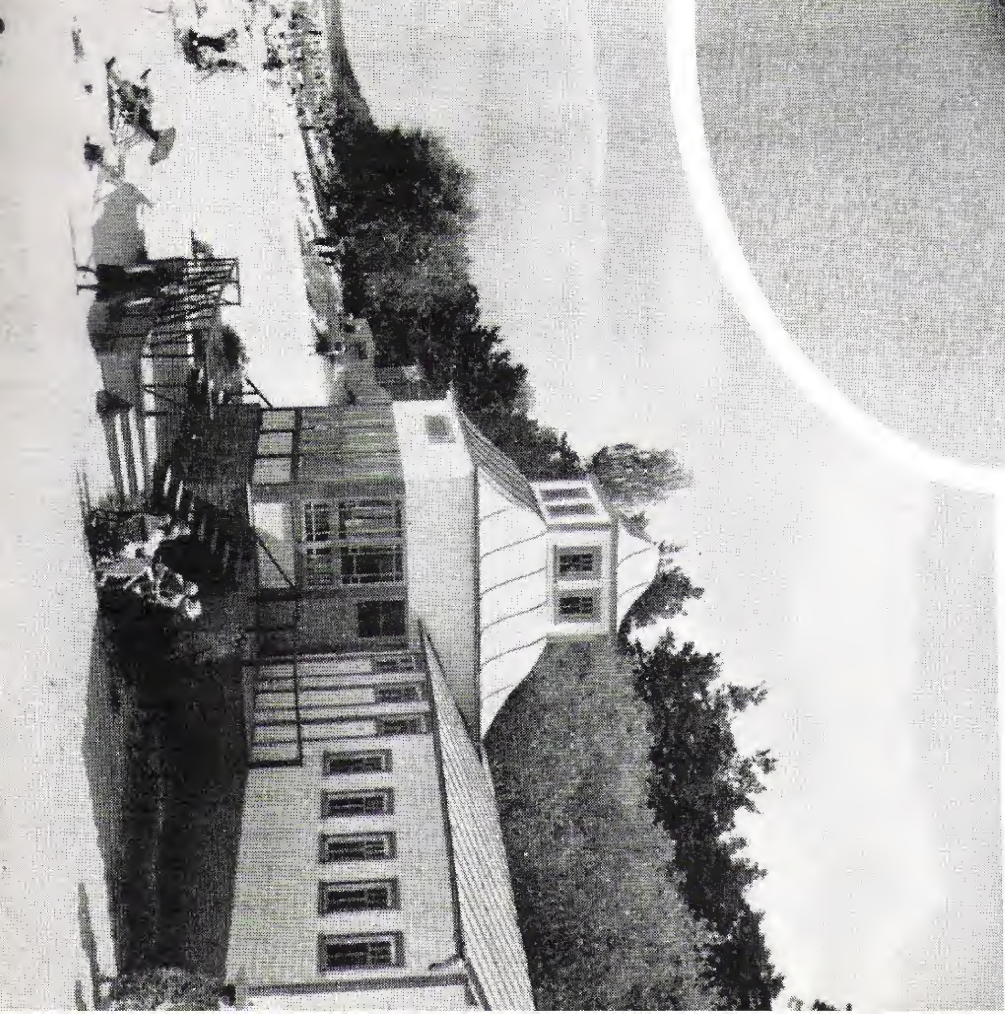
Stacking finished units at the Riga Electrical Machinery Factory, Riga.



Latvian fisherman aboard a trawler of the 'Zveinex' fishing collective of the Saulkrastys District.



RIGA—A view of the city—one of the oldest in Europe—from the October Bridge which spans the River Daugava (Western Dvina). Riga is fast becoming a busy industrial centre.



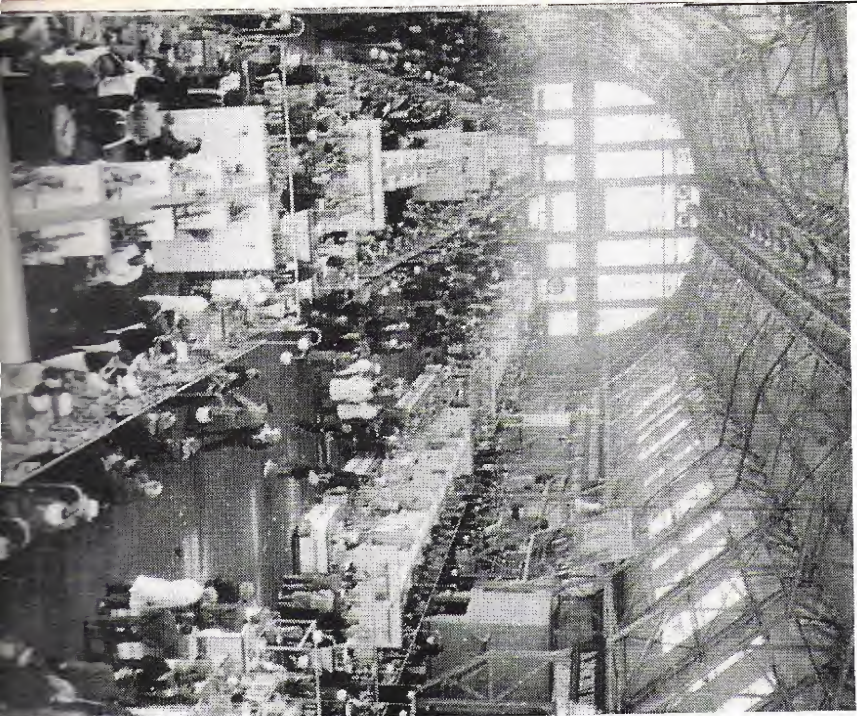
Below: A corner of Riga Beach on the amber-strewn Gulf of Riga—an inlet of the Baltic.



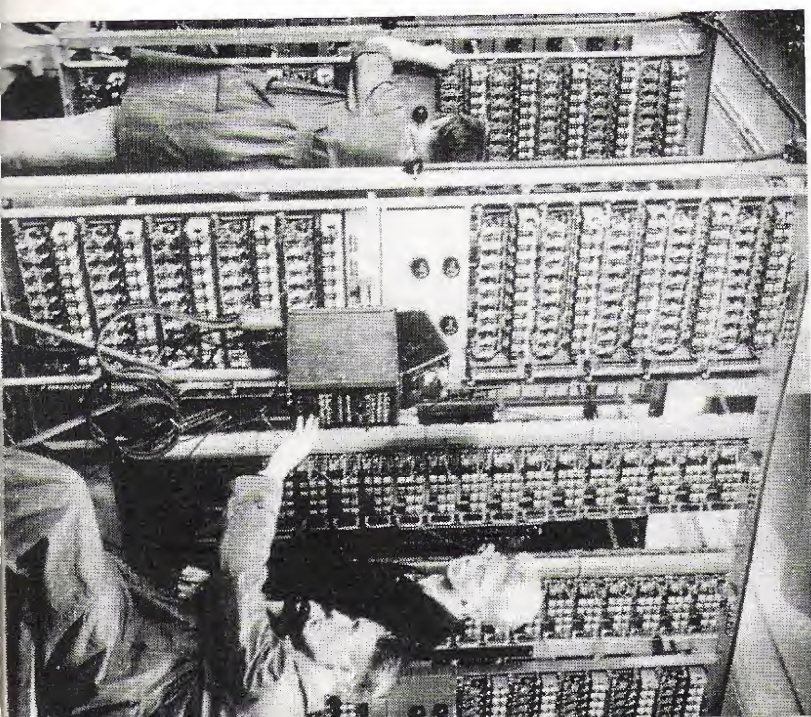
The Latvian national costume is seen in this group acting at the 'Saulgrietiņi' Folk Theatre, Riga.



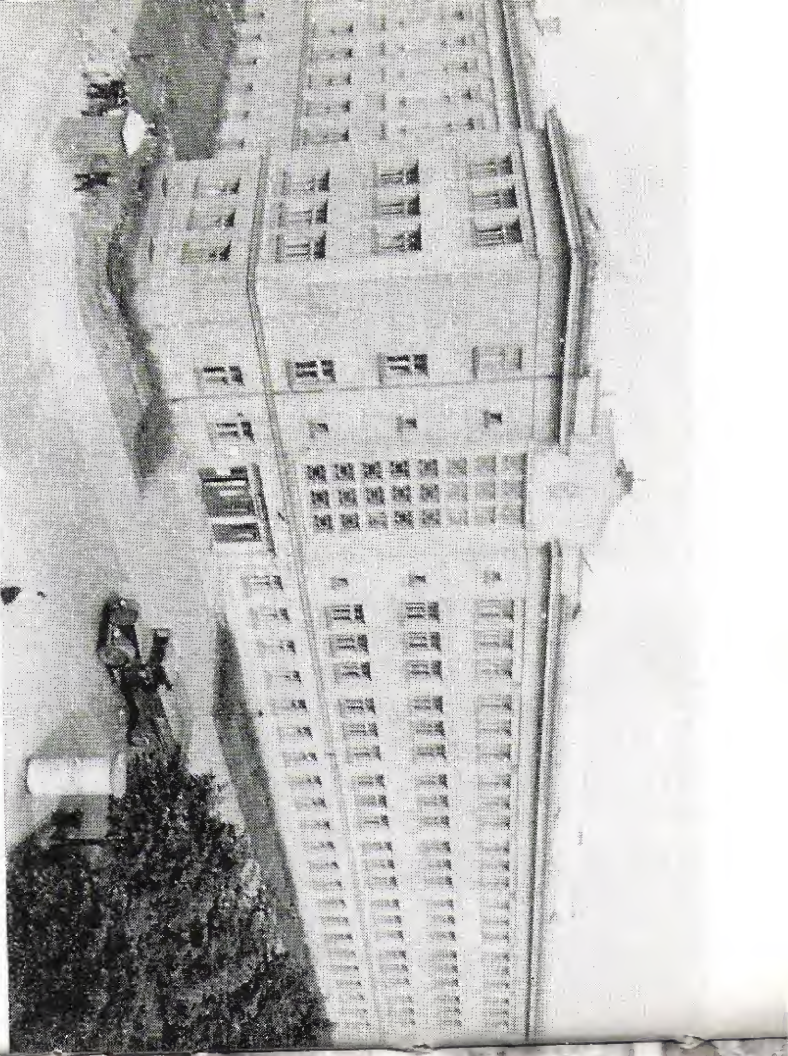
Above: Assembling radio sets at the Popov Radio Factory, Riga.



Left: The Meat Pavilion of the Central Collective Farm Market, Riga.



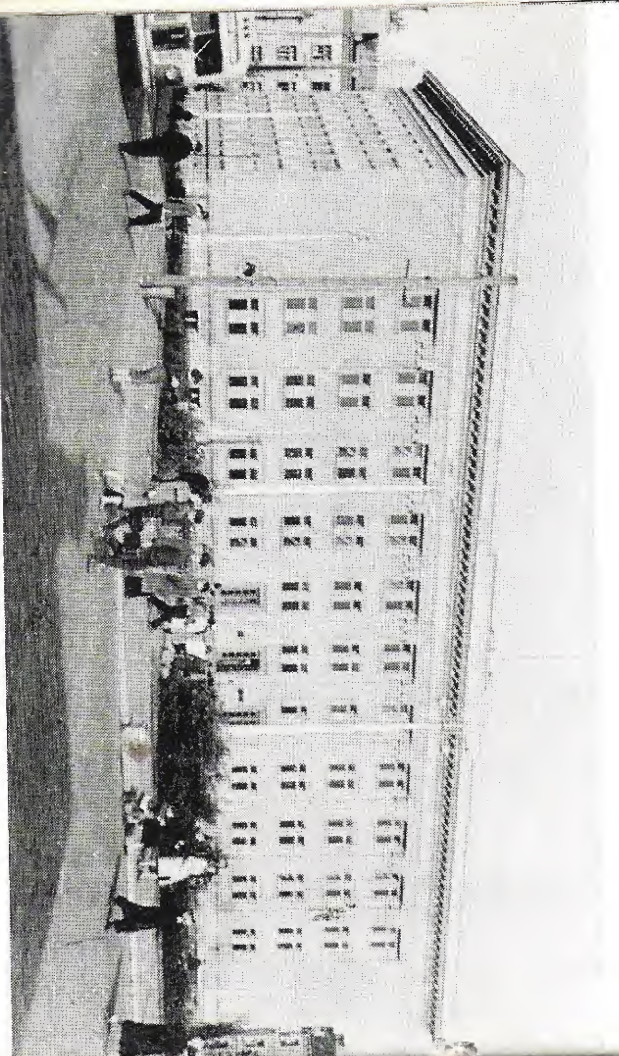
On the right, electrical workers are assembling an automatic telephone exchange at the V.E.F. Factory, Riga.



Riga Secondary School No. 6.



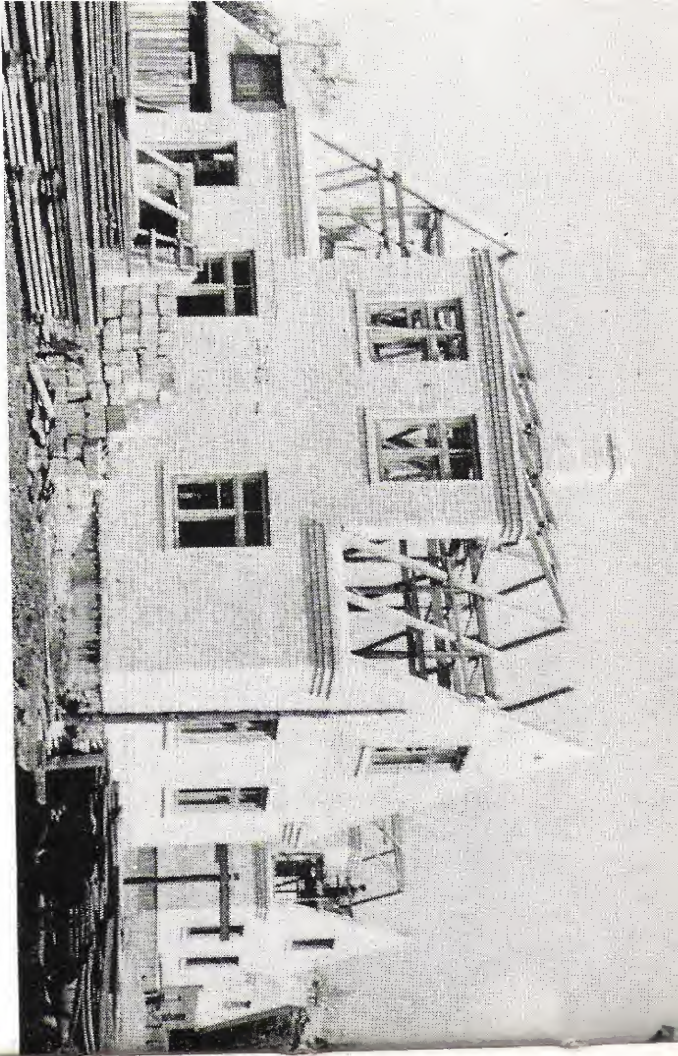
Mothers and their children enjoy themselves at a holiday home on the Gulf of Riga.



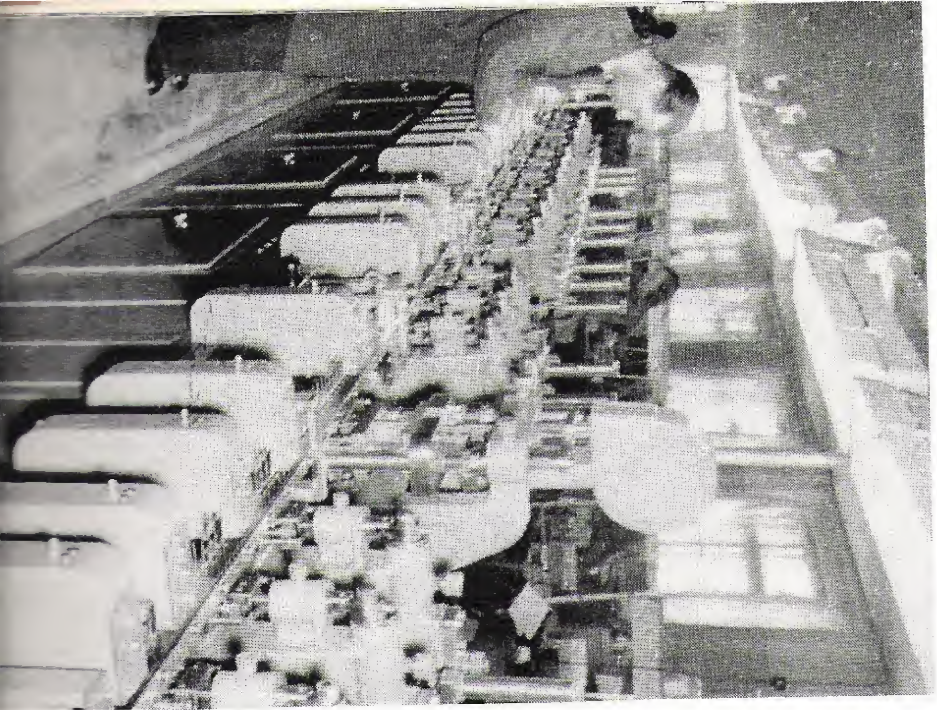
A new building for the Teachers' Training Institute in Daugavpils.

A new school in the area of the Sarkana Baka Collective Farm.





Above: A corner of a building site in Daugavpils which will house workers from the Motovelots Factory.



An automatic transfer production line at the V.E.F. Electrical Engineering Works, Riga.

The steep rise in head of cattle and livestock productivity will be achieved by creating a reliable fodder base, primarily by extending the area planted to maize.

By 1965 the major land reclamation project will have been carried out with the draining of 1,580,000 acres of swamp-land.

The level of agricultural mechanisation and electrification in Latvia will rise considerably. By 1965 the rural areas will be using 329 million kilowatt-hours of electric energy as against 57 million in 1958.

This means that every state farm and collective farm will be supplied with electricity and the chief labour-consuming jobs in farming and livestock breeding will be mechanised.

After discussing ways and means by which Latvian farming can be developed and thoroughly weighing all the pros and cons, the chairmen of collective farms, directors of state farms, and leading farm workers decided recently at an all-Latvian gathering that the seven-year targets in agriculture can be reached in five years.

Nikolai and Paulina Jacobson, for many years members of the Vanguard Collective Farm, Jelgava District, are a typical Latvian collective farm family. Together they receive about 15,000 roubles a year for their work, in addition to grain, potatoes, cabbage, sugar beet and other farm produce.

The Jacobsons have a vegetable garden of their own, 1½ acres in size, and own a cow, pigs and chickens. They do not have to buy any food and are able to sell some of their milk, eggs and meat at the market.

"Out of the 15,000 roubles we spend about 8,000 on clothing," says Paulina Jacobson. "Another 3,000 goes for furniture and household articles. The remainder is put in the bank. Last year we bought a TV set, silk for dresses for myself, and a suit for my husband. We moved into a new three-room house not long ago and are gradually buying new furniture to make things still nicer.

"We have calculated that by the end of the seven-year plan we shall be earning almost twice as much as we do now."

The Jacobsons go to the collective farm recreation centre several times a week. They rarely miss a film showing there, and always attend the theatre whenever they visit Riga.

Friendly Hands

A general movement forward in which all the Union Republics make steady progress by co-operating fruitfully with one another is characteristic of the economic development of the multi-national Soviet socialist state.

In the present period of transition from socialism to communism fraternal co-operation and mutual assistance are becoming still closer and more comprehensive.

The Communist Party strives constantly to extend and consolidate this co-operation as it contributes to the rapid development of the various republics and enriches the peoples of each republic spiritually.

Latvian industrial establishments now have mutual trade relations with seventy economic districts. There is probably no place in the far-flung

Soviet Union that does not use goods produced by Latvia's radio engineering industry.

Electric trains manufactured by the car-building works of Riga are found all over the country. Bicycles produced by the Sarkana Zvaigzne factory are highly popular. Linoleum made in Liepaja is used in railway carriages and steamship cabins.

Latvia supplies the Union Republics with hydrometric instruments, tram cars, electrical appliances, refrigerator units, braking equipment, compressors, telephone stations, lubricating equipment, electric installation equipment, and building materials.

Other economic districts, in their turn, give Latvia great assistance. There is probably almost no sphere of industry in Latvia to which friendly hands in other republics have not contributed.

Latvia annually brings in a total of more than 4,000 million roubles' worth of raw materials, equipment and various other goods. The Ukraine provides Latvia with piping, hardware and coal, Azerbaijan with oil and oil products, the Urals, Moscow and Leningrad with steel, pig iron, machine-tools, motor vehicles, etc.

Some 1,000 different items go to the VEF electrical works and the Popov radio factory alone.

The Central Asian republics send Latvia cotton fibres; wool comes from Turkmenia, the Ukraine and the Russian Federation; Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation provide staple fibre; Byelorussia and Uzbekistan send rayon and silk.

Trade

Latvian industries produce many goods for export. In capitalist times Latvia exported wood, butter, flax and bacon, and imported industrial goods.

Today the republic's chief exports are industrial goods of various kinds, including intricate machinery and precision instruments.

Trade relations with the People's Democracies are being extended. Telephone stations and apparatus, radio sets, lubricating equipment, electrical instruments, plastics, bicycles, hydrometric instruments, diesel engines and automobile electrical equipment are some of the goods that Latvia exports to these countries.

From Poland it imports cable; from Rumania and Bulgaria it gets fruit pulp for jams and jellies; Mongolia provides wool, China—starch for the Latvian food industry, soya bean, sunflower seed for her oil factories, and consumer goods, including fabrics.

Latvia exports many goods to the capitalist countries. Lumber goes to Britain, Western Germany and Iceland, sugar to Finland, cement to Costa Rica and Iceland, drugs to Finland, Iran, Afghanistan and the United Arab Republic, and sprats to Australia and Britain.

Latvian industrial establishments displayed their goods at twelve international exhibitions and fairs in 1958; and Latvian industrial exhibits won seventeen prizes at the Brussels Fair.

The ice-free ports of Liepaja and Ventspils, and the port of Riga, which is open for ten or eleven months of the year, are important to the entire Soviet Union. From there ships depart for countries of Western and Northern Europe and the Atlantic Ocean.

Between January and April these ports handle goods from many countries brought by ships which cannot put in at Leningrad, Tallinn or Arkhangel'sk during those months.

Jan Egilts has been pilot at the port of Riga for many years. Every morning his launch puts out to meet ships from many countries, Britain, France, Liberia, Iceland, the United Arab Republic, Costa Rica, Portugal and Poland, among them. His life story is bound up with the history of the port.

As coal was being unloaded from a British ship some twenty years ago the winch broke and a basket fell, killing a man with whom Jan had been friends from childhood. The man was buried with the aid of money collected among the stevedores.

The next morning Jan brought the man's 14-year-old son Karl to the port to find work. Together with the other stevedores he carried baskets of stone and coke on his shoulders, or pushed wheelbarrows up swaying gangplanks as the ships were loaded.

What a contrast the port offers today! Locomotive whistles mingle with the clank of tractors and the rumble of lorries and loading mechanisms. Crabs can load an ocean-going steamer in seven hours.

Cranes tower above the port. Karl operates one of them. With ease they lift crates containing motor vehicles and industrial equipment and heavy bales of cotton and flax, and help to unload hundreds of tons of coal, coke and metal and to load Urals ore destined for France, coke for Denmark and machinery for Poland.

To Benefit Man

Socialist economy is being developed in order to satisfy to the maximum the growing material and cultural requirements of the Soviet people.

Over the past seven years the purchasing power of the Latvian population has increased two-and-a-half times.

Higher wages for certain categories of workers, abolition of a number of taxes and of secondary and higher school tuition fees, and price reductions in the state-owned shops and at the collective farm markets have all contributed substantially to an increase in real wages.

As in other parts of the Soviet Union plants and factories in Latvia are gradually introducing a seven-hour day. By 1965 the working week in Latvia will be 30-35 hours. This year thirty enterprises in Riga, employing thousands of workers, will have a shorter workday.

Living and housing conditions will show marked improvement during the next seven years. The state is investing over 1,500 million roubles in housing construction. This is almost twice as much as was spent for the same purpose in the previous seven years.

Including privately-built houses, the urban population will receive an additional 3 million square metres or so of living space by the end of the seven-year period, while from 50,000 to 55,000 new homes will have been put up in the rural areas.

Before the Soviet system was established in Latvia allocations for the health services never amounted to more than 1.8 per cent of the state budget. Medical institutions were as a rule private establishments or were supported by some institution or charitable organisation and charged fees.

Today the health services are in the hands of the state, which provides all members of the population with skilled medical aid free of charge. Hundreds of hospitals and scores of sanatoria and other medical establishments have been built since the war.

Latvia had eighty-nine hospitals in 1940; by 1957 there were 275, as well as a large number of health centres.

With its mild climate, picturesque landscape, pine forests, mineral waters, mud baths and sea bathing Latvia makes a wonderful health resort. Kemeri and Baldone on the Gulf of Riga are famous Latvian resorts extremely popular today. More than 70,000 people spend their holidays at the Riga seaside every year.

Latvia's Scientists at Work

Through the Soviet system Latvian scientists realised a dream they always had—the establishment of their own Academy of Sciences. Such an academy was set up in the republic in the first year after the war and today embraces fourteen research institutes.

In recent years Latvia's scientists have devised apparatus for the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy and instruments employing radioactive isotopes have been installed at a number of industrial establishments.

The results of this work have been demonstrated at international exhibitions in Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and China.

Latvian scientists have made investigations in the field of magnetic hydrodynamics and introduced improvements into high-speed electronic computers. They have worked out new technological processes, among them methods of hydrolysing wood to obtain sugars and fodder yeasts.

They have made an important contribution to the chemical and drug industries by synthesising valuable new drugs (among them anti-tubercular and anti-cancer drugs) which are finding successful application.

At the Institute of Organic Synthesis of the Latvian Academy of Sciences a group working under Academician S. Giller has mastered the technology of making Tio Tef, the most effective of the chemical drugs used to treat certain forms of cancer.

Tests have shown that Tio Tef brings about a general improvement in the patient's condition, reduces pain, and resolves tumours. The drug is used chiefly after operations, in treating neglected cases of cancer, and in combination with other methods of treatment.

During the current seven-year period Latvian scientists will pay particular attention to investigations in the physical sciences, to problems of utilising atomic energy for peaceful purposes, to semi-conductors, and to automation in industry.

Describing new studies and discoveries by workers in his laboratory, Y. Krumin, head of the radio physics laboratory of the Institute of Physics, one of the largest in the republic, says:

"Achievements in science and engineering are unthinkable today without radio electronics. Our laboratory does research of a scientific and applied nature in this field. E. Greenburg, for instance, has made a valuable contribution to the theory of radio engineering with his new method of single-step designing of weak-current electric circuits."

Radio electronics is coming to be used more and more in medicine; for instance, for artificial inhibition of the processes taking place in the cortex. A human being can be put to sleep under the influence of the impulses of electric currents. There are various so-called "electro-sleep" instruments used to generate such impulses.

A. Apšit, Honoured Worker in Science and Engineering of the Latvian S.S.R., and his co-workers at the Institute of Physics A. Vitolin and A. Bute, have designed a new transistor model of an "electro-sleep" device which is small in size, battery-operated, and perfectly harmless. The apparatus is now being employed in investigations at the Institute of Experimental Medicine of the Latvian Academy of Sciences.

The radio physics laboratory is also investigating ferrite techniques. R. Kalnin is studying the properties of coils with ferrite cores. His research indicates ways of manufacturing high-quality coils with minimum expenditure of material.

Research workers at the laboratory are now engaged in designing a small-size memory device with ferrite cores for the Institute's electronic computers. Since transistors are used in the amplifiers, the memory unit will contain only some fifty electron tubes compared with the 800 tubes in old-type units.

A group headed by F. Eremin, Candidate of Technical Science, is studying certain problems of information theory. Their work has led to the building of a special apparatus to detect the movement of air in closed rooms, for instance, when objects fall, when fire appears or there is a wind. With the help of a relay the apparatus sets in motion a signal mechanism.

Another group is working on a problem that could be termed "quantum radio physics". The group is studying the interactions between radio waves and the molecules and atoms of substances.

A particularly wide study is being made of the absorption and emission of high-frequency and super high-frequency radio waves by various crystals and gases. These investigations will enable scientists to learn new facts concerning the structure of the world of molecules and atoms around us.

New oscillators and amplifiers of super-high frequencies have been built on the basis of these investigations. Extremely sensitive devices for the analysis of substances also stem from this research.

Radio physicists are studying nuclear resonance—that is the interaction of radio waves and atomic nuclei. This research makes it possible to build instruments capable of measuring and stabilising magnetic fields with a precision hitherto unknown (up to 0.001 per cent and higher). Two research workers, A. Ginsburg and V. Zeigur, have already made such an instrument.

In future, research in the field of quantum radio physics is to be conducted on a still broader scale.

In addition to nuclear resonance a study will be made of another type of interaction between radio waves and substances: electronic resonance—that is the action of radio waves on electrons.

The radio physics laboratory plans to concentrate primarily on research into the effects of radioactive radiation on ferro-magnetic bodies and

transistors. Nuclear and electronic resonance techniques will play a leading role in these investigations.

In accordance with a recent decision of the Soviet Government an atomic reactor is to be built in Latvia. It will go into operation next year.

The decision is important not only to Latvian science. Countries like Italy, Austria, Portugal, Spain and Greece, to say nothing of the South American countries or the countries of Asia and Africa, do not have atomic reactors.

In the Soviet Union they are being built in several of the Union Republics, among them Byelorussia, Uzbekistan and Georgia. Other republics will help Latvia to build her reactor by providing equipment and nuclear fuel. The Latvian reactor will be available to scientists of Estonia and Lithuania.

Physicists are now working on new designs for high-speed electronic computers to control production processes, conveyors and machines. Robots are to be built in the near future capable of performing various operations, for example, in rooms contaminated by radioactive or chemical substances.

Work is proceeding in close collaboration with the Academies of Sciences of Byelorussia, Lithuania and Estonia and the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. to develop a single power system for the north-western part of the Soviet Union.

The research conducted by biochemists, agrochemists, biophysicists and microbiologists is also of great importance. Of especial prominence is the study of trace elements of copper, manganese, zinc, and molybdenum, which are nutritionally important to plants, animals and human beings because they stimulate the activity of enzymes, hormones and vitamins.

The Institute of Biology of the Latvian Academy of Sciences has been commissioned to co-ordinate research on these problems with all other institutes in the country working along the same lines.

Latvian scientists also plan to work on problems connected with the widescale application of trace elements in agriculture.

The Institute of Organic Synthesis will continue its study of the synthesis of drugs used in the treatment of high blood pressure, malignant tumours and cardiovascular diseases and drugs used to stimulate the growth of farm animals.

Within the next few years Latvian scholars will complete a two-volume grammar of modern literary Lettish, a dictionary in several volumes, a dialect atlas of the Lettish language, and a history of Latvian literature in six volumes.

Learning Within Everyone's Reach

A cultural revolution has taken place in Latvia since Soviet rule was proclaimed there. Illiteracy has been liquidated within a short space of time, and the number of secondary and higher schools has increased sharply.

In 1939 Latvia had only seventy-six secondary schools. Today there are 266. This figure does not include the seventy-three evening schools for working youth and the twelve boarding schools. Another 104 schools are to be built between 1959 and 1965.

In level of educational development the Latvian republic has far surpassed capitalist Latvia and is considerably ahead of the capitalist countries.

Following countrywide discussion, a law was adopted in Latvia bringing the schools closer to life and further developing the republic's system of public education. New curricula and syllabuses are now being drawn up.

By the time the 1962-63 school year begins all the seven-year schools will have been converted into eight-year schools and the programme of vocational training in the senior forms of the secondary schools will have been considerably extended.

More and more boarding schools are to be opened in Soviet Latvia. These boarding schools enhance the role of society in rearing the youth and are a help to the family in educating the child in the spirit of communism.

"Boarding schools are established in healthy localities and are provided with the best equipment," says T. Viganter, director of Riga's boarding school No. 2. "Our aim is to give the child a thorough knowledge, develop him physically, educate him ethically and aesthetically, and prepare him for life and practical activity."

"Extracurricular activities are an important part of boarding school life. Our school, for example, has an amateur theatricals' club, a dance group, groups studying music, a brass band, a fine arts circle, a nature lovers' club, a technical hobby club and groups for children with other various hobbies."

"As part of their vocational training the children learn the basic elements of carpentry, sewing, cooking, gardening and farming. They also help to keep the school premises tidy and work on the farm that supplies the school with food produce."

Latvia has nine higher educational establishments, five more than in capitalist times. Young people may also obtain a higher education at institutes and universities in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities of the Soviet Union.

This year about 700 young men and women were graduated from the Peter Stuchka State University of Latvia. They will work in industry, research, education and agriculture. All roads are open to them and every opportunity provided for them to take part in building communism. Young engineers, schoolteachers and agronomists volunteer for work at the most difficult jobs in remote sections of the republic.

Art for the People

A large number of cultural and educational establishments have been set up in Latvia since the war. More and more Houses of Culture and recreation centres are opened each year in both towns and rural localities.

In the coming seven years Latvia will build a new drama theatre in Riga, sixteen Houses of Culture, a film studio producing seven or eight full-length pictures a year, a cinema theatre in Riga seating 2,500, and a new building for the Latvian State Library.

By 1965 almost every district centre will have a well-equipped House of Culture, library, children's library and park.

Letish literature is well-known in the Soviet Union and abroad. The prominent French author Louis Aragon, who has been popularising Letish literature in France for many years, says: "I have long been interested in Letish literature and am proud to have been the one to introduce Latvia's classical novelists, poets and playwrights to the French public. I believe Andrei Uptis to be among the world's greatest writers, worthy of being ranked with Romain Rolland, Mikhail Sholokhov and Leon Feuchtwanger."

Among new works which have appeared in Letish literature in recent years there are the novels *With Heart and Blood* by Bredele, *The Road of Life* by Giva, *The Siline Estate* by Selis, Finber's *The Grey Land* and *The Nevel Captain* by Zadornov, and poetry by Luts, Kampe, Balodis, Vaisietis and Stulpan.

Literary criticism includes Uptis' *Problems of Socialist Realism in Literature*, Volume III of the *Letish Literary Critic and Essays on the History of Soviet Letish Literature*.

Latvian theatres stage modern Soviet and foreign plays, as well as Letish and world classics. The most popular plays in 1958 were Pogodin's *Third Pathétique* and Deglav's *Riga* staged at the Academic Drama Theatre, Gunar Priede's *Girl from Normund* at the Rainis Art Theatre, *Typhoon* by Tsao Yui, Chinese playwright, at the Russian Drama Theatre in Riga, *Fire and the Night* by Jan Rainis at the Liepaja Music and Drama Theatre, and Zarin's comic opera *The Green Mill* at the Opera and Ballet Theatre. Latvian theatre companies go on tours of the Soviet Union every year.

In 1958 the Riga studio completed filming of two full-length feature films, *Tale of a Latvian Rifleman* and *Stranger in the Village*, and put out more than fifty documentaries and popular science films. It also dubbed twenty-five films into the Latvian language.

Latvian artists displayed their work at the Art Exhibition of the Socialist countries in Moscow, and at the Brussels Fair, where the painter Kalnins was awarded a silver medal for his *Latvian Fishermen in the Atlantic*.

Literature and art that reveal the new features of contemporary life are particularly valuable in educating man for life in a communist society. Interpretation of the contemporary scene is especially successful when the writer or artist has lived in close contact with the common people.

To realise the topicality of Soviet art and its genuine closeness to the people one should recall the period thirty years ago when the whole capitalist world, including little Latvia, was in the grip of an economic crisis and poverty and insecurity were the lot of the working people.

Then frivolous operettas at the music theatres, shallow comedies at the drama theatres, formalistic art at the exhibitions, and books that praised the existing system were typical of literature and art.

The idea of social progress was found only in illegal books and in whatever writing by progressive authors managed to get past the censor.

The time is not distant when every Soviet person will have sufficient leisure in which to study music, painting, acting or any other form of art.

Thousands of factory and office workers and collective farmers already devote their free time to amateur talent activities.

Performances by groups of amateurs are frequently of such a high level as to approach professional standards. In recent years seven amateur drama clubs have been turned into People's Theatres. One is the People's Theatre of Talsi, which, at an all-Latvian theatrical review, many members of the jury considered was more successful with its staging of Gunar Priede's *Girl from Normund* than the Rainis Art Theatre.

Latvia holds song and dance festivals every year. One of the largest takes place at the time of the colourful Ligo holiday that the Latvian people celebrate in the middle of summer. The festival is attended by people from the neighbouring republics and from many other parts of the Soviet Union.

As Soviet Latvia's cultural contacts with foreign countries widen, artists from abroad appear more and more often before audiences in the republic, and Latvian performers are making more and more foreign tours. Describing the successful appearance in Czechoslovakia a short time ago of the ballet company of the Latvian Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Czech newspaper *Rude Pravo* said:

"The extensive and striking programme which our Latvian guests have brought to Prague enables them to display their versatility to the full. Besides selections from ballets by Tchaikovsky, Glère, Solovoyev-Sedoy and other composers, the company has presented a number of delightful Latvian folk dances, thoughtful dances and dances sparkling with merriment. Nor have they forgotten to show us selections from modern Soviet Latvian ballets.

"With its high standard of technique and wealth of expression Latvian ballet dancing is in the tradition of the Soviet ballet."

Prague audiences were particularly appreciative of the dancing of Velta Vilisin and Vladimir Tsukanov.

Why They Returned

The vicissitudes of the Second World War took Jan Hegmanis to Australia, where he worked on a sugar plantation and then at a Ford factory warehouse in Sydney.

In 1955 many of the Latvians living in Australia began to receive letters from home. Jan Hegmanis grew anxious to hear from his family. He wrote to his wife's relatives.

His wife answered, begging him to come home. She told him about life there and gave him news of their son, already in secondary school. Hegmanis eagerly searched for information about Latvia.

The Soviet newspapers and magazines he managed to lay hands on made him realise that everything in the anti-Soviet emigré press was a pack of lies. He firmly resolved to go back to Latvia. Not long ago his dream came true.

"You may live wherever you wish and work at whatever suits you," Hegmanis was told when he was given his Soviet passport.

"That was a pleasant surprise to me, for we had been told quite the opposite," says Hegmanis. "Tremendous changes have taken place in

Latvia. And what is most wonderful, to my mind, is that there is no problem at all about finding the work you want."

Jan Muiznieks returned to Latvia from West Germany in 1959. In Bielefeld, where he lived, Jan had heard the wildest tales about Soviet Latvia. The country was said to be starving and poverty-stricken and the majority of the Latvian population living in forced labour camps.

Rumour among the emigrants had it that anyone who returned home was immediately put into a labour camp. As to the letters from relatives, their praise of life in Soviet Latvia, it was said, was because they were afraid to write anything else.

"It's hard to recognise Riga after so many years," says Muiznieks. "Now it is a large, modern city with lovely streets, parks and gardens and big shops where you can get whatever you want. I haven't been back long, so it still seems like a wonderful dream after what I went through in Germany. Only now do I understand what shocking lies my former bosses in West Germany spread about Soviet Latvia."

Their Dream is Coming True

The age in which we live is filled with great historical events. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the Soviet people, inspired by the seven-year plan for the development of their country, are performing feats of labour day after day as they turn deserts into flourishing gardens, curb the elements, and make the forces of nature serve man.

All over the vast Soviet Union, factories, mills, power stations and cities are being built. People are going down into the bowels of the earth to bring up new treasures and are conquering outer space. Future generations will envy us that we lived in such a wonderful and unique age.

Following a recent visit to Latvia the Czech journalist F. Soukup wrote an account of Riga, *Pearl of the Baltic*. "Riga's distant past was discordant and stormy, her recent past filled with heroism," writes the author. "What of her present? The city is filled with signs that afford an answer; they also point to what her future will be like. There is scaffolding everywhere, as it is everywhere in other Soviet cities, showing that the seven-year plan is in full swing."

The Soviet Union's seven-year plan is a magnificent plan of peaceful construction. The period of its fulfilment will be marked by the progress of economy, culture, science, education and health protection. Soviet Latvia will grow richer and more beautiful.

But this will be possible only because Latvia is advancing side by side with the fraternal republics of the Soviet Union. The seven-year plan is an embodiment of Lenin's principle of friendship among the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The plan provides for efficient utilisation of the resources and abilities of each of the republics belonging to the great commonwealth of socialist nations.

The creative life of the Soviet people is like a great stream into which flow thousands of rivulets and innumerable brooks. From thousands of springs of popular initiative comes the great upsurge of labour and political activity of the Soviet people, whose thoughts and deeds are directed towards mankind's radiant future, towards communism. And their dream is coming true.

